



NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
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Drought Dries Up Hope for Bountiful Fall Harvest

Farmers in Maryland and Delaware are seeing their hopes for a bountiful fall harvest dashed. Weather conditions in the mid-Atlantic this summer are mirroring those of 2002, when drought brought yields to unexpected lows. According to a survey released today by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, production of corn and soybeans are expected to be down by one-third. These statistics are especially painful as farmers planted more corn this year in response to higher prices and increased demand, which were driven by increased production of ethanol fuel. One bright spot for grain producers is this year's small grain harvest. Yields for wheat and barley are expected to be near those of 2006, as these crops were harvested by July, when the drought set in. Apple producers are also being impacted by the drought, and are reporting lower expected yields.

Maryland: Corn production in Maryland is expected to be down 30 percent from 2006 due to low yields. Although acreage planted in corn increased 10 percent this year to 540,000 acres, production is expected to plummet from 60.3 million bushels harvested last year to 42.3 million bushels this year. This assumes that 470,000 acres will be harvested as now indicated. The average yield for corn is expected to be only 90 bushels per acre, down 37 percent from 142 bushels per acre in 2006 this is the lowest yield since 2002 when yield was 74 bushels per acre. Soybeans are expected to yield 25 bushels per acre this year, down 26 percent from 34 bushels per acre in 2006. Producers expect to harvest 420,000 acres in 2007, as compared with 465,000 acres in 2006. Acreage is down, as farmers planted more of their fields in corn. As a result of reduced yield and acreage, total production is expected to be down 34 percent, from 15.8 million bushels in 2006 to an estimated 10.5 million bushels this year. With wheat harvest complete, yield is estimated at 64 bushels per acre translating to a crop of 11.2 million bushels. Barley yields are estimated at 83 bushels per acre, 5 percent down from the final 2006 yield. Maryland apple production is forecast to drop 3 percent from 2006 to 33.0 million pounds.

Delaware: Corn production in Delaware is expected to be down 40 percent from last year, despite an increase in acres planted. Farmers planted 185,000 acres of corn this year and expect to harvest 175,000 acres for grain. This compares with 161,000 acres harvested for grain in 2006. However, yield is expected to plummet 45 percent, to 80 bushels per acre. This is the lowest since 2002, when yield was 84 bushels per acre, and compares with an average 145 bushels per acre last year. Soybean production is expected to be down 32 percent from 2005, due to both lower yield and acreage. Producers are expected to harvest 155,000 acres of soybeans in 2007, as compared with 177,000 acres in 2006. Growers are expecting yield to be down 23 percent from 2007, to an average 24 bushels per acre. This is the lowest since 1995 when the average yield was 20 bushels per acre. Total soybean production is estimated at 3.7 million bushels, as compared with 5.5 million bushels produced last year. Yield for winter wheat is estimated at 65 bushels per acre, down 2 bushels from 2006. With 55,000 acres harvested this year, wheat production is estimated at 3.6 million bushels, up from 3.0 million bushels harvested in 2006. Barley growers harvested an estimated 20,000 acres of barley with an average yield of 82 bushels per acre. Yield is up 2 bushels per acre from last year and 2006 production is estimated at 1.6 million bushels.

United States: Corn production is forecast at 13.1 billion bushels, up 24 percent from last year and 17 percent above 2005. Based on conditions as of August 1, yields are expected to average 152.8 bushels per acre, up 3.7 bushels from last year. If realized, this will be the second highest yield on record, behind the 160.4 bushel yield in 2004. However, production will be the largest on record as growers intend to harvest the most corn acres for grain since 1933. Yield forecasts are higher than last year across the Great Plains where frequent rainfall during much of the growing season provided abundant soil moisture for filling the crop. Higher yields are also expected in the central Corn Belt and Delta where timely rains benefitted the crop. Expected yields across much of the northern and eastern Corn Belt, Ohio Valley, Tennessee Valley, Southeast, and Atlantic Coast States are below last year as hot, dry conditions during much of the growing season reduced soil moisture supplies and stressed the crop.

Soybean production is forecast at 2.63 billion bushels, down 18 percent from last year's record high and down 14 percent from 2005. Based on August 1 conditions, yields are expected to average 41.5 bushels per acre, down 1.2 bushels from last year. Yields are lower than 2006 throughout most of the Atlantic Coast States, most of the Corn Belt, and the Tennessee Valley, while yields are expected to remain unchanged or increase across the Great Plains, the Gulf Coast States, and Arkansas. Area for harvest, at 63.3 million acres, remains unchanged from June but is down 15 percent from 2006.

Winter wheat production is forecast at 1.54 billion bushels. This is down 2 percent from last month but 18 percent above 2006. The U.S. yield is forecast at 41.3 bushels per acre, down 0.3 bushel from last month and down 0.4 bushel from last year. The area expected to be harvested for grain totals 37.2 million acres, down 1 percent from last month but up 20 percent from last year.

ACREAGE, YIELD AND PRODUCTION 2006 AND 2007

Commodity	Unit	Planted		Harvested		Average Yield		Production	
		2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Maryland		1,000 Acres						1,000	
Corn ¹	ACR	490	540	----	----	----	----	----	----
Corn, Grain	BU	----	----	425	470	142	90	60,350	42,300
Corn, Silage	TON	----	----	60	----	17	----	1,020	----
Soybeans	BU	470	430	465	420	34	25	15,810	10,500
Wheat, Winter	BU	210	225	125	175	68	64	8,500	11,200
Barley	BU	50	45	32	34	87	83	2,784	2,822
Hay, All	TON	----	----	205	210	2.78	----	569	----
Hay, Alfalfa	TON	----	----	40	40	3.90	----	156	----
Hay, Other	TON	----	----	165	170	2.50	----	413	----
Apples	LBS	----	----	----	----	----	----	34,000	33,000
Peaches	TON	----	----	----	----	----	----	3.7	3.4
Potatoes, Summer	CWT	4.0	4.0	2.9	3.9	320	350	928	1,365

Delaware									
Corn ¹	ACR	170	185	----	----	----	----	----	----
Corn, Grain	BU	----	----	161	175	145	80	23,345	14,000
Corn, Silage	TON	----	----	8	----	20	----	160	----
Soybeans	BU	180	160	177	155	31	24	5,487	3,720
Wheat, Winter	BU	48	57	45	55	67	65	3,015	3,575
Barley	BU	27	23	24	20	80	82	1,920	1,640
Hay, All	TON	----	----	14	15	2.86	----	40	----
Hay, Alfalfa	TON	----	----	5	5	3.90	----	20	----
Hay, Other	TON	----	----	9	10	2.20	----	20	----
Potatoes, Summer	CWT	3.0	3.3	2.1	3.2	240	270	504	864

United States								1,000,000	
Corn ¹	ACR	78,327	92,888	----	----	----	----	----	----
Corn, Grain	BU	----	----	70,648	85,418	149	153	10,535	13,054
Corn, Silage	TON	----	----	6,477	----	16	----	105	----
Soybeans	BU	75,522	64,081	74,602	63,285	43	42	3,188	2,625
Wheat, Winter	BU	40,575	45,136	31,117	37,188	42	41	1,298	1,537
Barley	BU	3,452	4,044	2,951	3,542	61	63	180	233
All Hay	TON	----	----	60,807	61,789	2.33	2.35	142	145
Hay, Alfalfa	TON	----	----	21,384	21,451	3.35	3.26	72	70
Hay, Other	TON	----	----	39,423	40,338	1.78	1.87	70	75
Apples	LBS	----	----	----	----	----	----	9,932	9,285
Peaches	TON	----	----	----	----	----	----	1.01	1.03
Potatoes, Summer	CWT	58.4	55.8	54.3	53.8	338	311	18.4	16.7

¹ Acres planted for all purposes.

